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IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph commencing on page 3 with the text "In accordance with a first embodiment of the present invention ..." as follows:

-- In accordance with a first embodiment of the present invention, there is provided an order merging system, the system comprising: at least two depalletizing stations, each depalletizing station being dedicated to a different respective product unit depalletized thereon; for each depalletizing station, at least one pair of first case guides in communication therewith and having at least one pair of curved, twisted and downwardly sloping lanes for guiding at least one product case of the respective product unit for the depalletizing station therealong in each of the first case guides; for each pair of first case guides, at least one pair of lowerable raisable guides connected downstream thereof of the first case guides and in respective communication therewith; at least one pair of independent mixing second case guides of a mixing conveyor for receiving mixed product cases thereon to feed the cases away from the at least two depalletizing stations and located downstream therefrom, each said lowerable ~~second case~~ guide being selectively in communication with a respective one of said ~~raisable~~ second case guides, the lowerable raisable guides being selectively lowerable to allow the product cases of the respective product unit for the depalletizing stations from each said first case guide to selectively merge onto a respective said second case guide, each said depalletizing station being at a respective location along the mixing second case guides such that one of the at least two depalletizing stations is downstream of the other one relative to the mixing second case guides, each said lowerable ~~raisable~~ guide allowing ~~flowing of mixed product cases located merged~~ merged onto respective said second case guide from an upstream said depalletizing station to flow thereunder when in a raised position. --

Please amend the paragraph commencing on page 8 with the text "Due to a high rate of instantaneous demand ..." as follows:

-- Due to a high rate of instantaneous demand which is required for an individual SKU, compared to the rate at which the operator 41 can depalletize, the sloped gravity conveyor 62 acts as a buffer to ensure that the system 10

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does not run out of product. The sloped gravity conveyor 62 is a steep, twisted, high-speed controlled gravity accumulation conveyor in which cases of product traveling from the hingeable conveyor 55 to the mixing conveyor 16 pass through two accumulating gravity curves 74, 76 located in the parallel accumulation lanes 66, 68. The sloped gravity curve 62 sloped downwardly towards the mixing conveyor 16, which is planar. Although two gravity curves 74, 76 are illustrated, one skilled in the art will understand that although two gravity curves 74, 76 are illustrated, the upper gravity curve 74 can be removed leaving only one gravity curve 76 located at the lower end of the sloped gravity conveyor 62, without deviating from the scope of the present invention. The travel speed of the cases of product 40 is limited by series of speed controllers 79 connected to the accumulation lanes 66, 68. A brake/ metering mechanism 78 is integrated into each of the parallel lanes 66, 68 and includes an actuatable friction pad 69, which applies friction to the underside of the rollers of the accumulation lanes 66, 68 to stop them from rolling. Boxes, which may be traveling down the sloped conveyor 62, will stop on the stopped rollers. The brake mechanism holds back accumulating product and meters the product into a merging area 80 when the brake mechanism is released. The curve 76 leads the boxes towards a downstream stopper mechanism 82, which ensures that no boxes pass therethrough onto a movable chute 84 when they are not expected and thereby acts as a safety device. The chute 84 is lowered just in time to allow the box to merge onto the mixing conveyor 16. The movable chute 84, as illustrated, operates as a ~~raisable~~ lowerable guide, which lowers to allow the boxes to merge onto the mixing conveyor 16. --